



The Importance of *‘Ilm al-Kalām*

Imām Tāqīyuddīn al-Subkī

Translated by S. Abdul Aziz

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The Imām and Ḥāfiẓ, Taqīyuddīn al-Subkī, said in his collection of responses to the questions put forth by Ḥāfiẓ ‘Afīfuddīn al-Maṭarī¹:

No one among those that came after the companions (of the Prophet ﷺ) reached their level. This is because most of the sciences that we research and focus on day and night—such as language, grammar, morphology, and the fundamentals of jurisprudence—were already in their possession as a part of their natural makeup. The strength of their intellect and the light of Prophethood that Allāh enlightened them with (through the Prophet ﷺ) that protected them from error in thought, sufficed them from (involving themselves with) logic and the other rational sciences.

When Allāh united their hearts and by His bounty, they became brothers, they were sufficed from preparing for debates and argumentation. In their sciences, they did not need anything save what they heard from the Prophet ﷺ of the Book and the Sunnah. They understood it in the best of ways. They carried it in the best of manners. They applied it in the best of applications. There was no one among them that would debate or argue regarding it [the Qur’ān], nor was there any innovation or misguidance among them.

After their time, the followers (the *tābi‘ūn*) were close to them with regards to their status and method. After them came their followers (*atbā‘uhum*), and all

¹ Translated from: <http://www.aslein.net/showthread.php?t=6272>

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of these were the three generations that the Prophet ﷺ testified regarding their goodness after him.

After them, the people of innovation and misguidance—that were few during their time—grew, so the scholars of *ahl al-Sunnah* needed to confront them, debate them, and argue with them lest they deceive the weak ones with respect to their religion and add to the *dīn* what is not a part of it.

The arguments of the people of innovation were increasingly influenced by the works of the logicians and other people of heresy, which they subsequently used to build many doubts to use against us. If we were to have left them alone with what they were doing, they would have overcome many of the weak ones and laymen among the Muslims, as well as their negligent jurists and scholars—thereby leading them all astray and altering their correct beliefs. This would have also lead to the spread of innovations and heresies. It was not possible for every single individual to counter them, and chances were that their words would not be understood by all due to the people not busying themselves (with their words).

The views of the innovator could only be refuted by one that understood them. As long as the (innovator) is not refuted, his views become dominant, and the ignorant ones, the leaders, the kings, and those in charge over the citizenry believe the words of the innovator to be the truth—as has precisely occurred in many lands wherein the aspirations of the people were diminished, when compared to how the previous generations were.

Based upon all of this, it was obligatory that there be among the people, one by whom Allāh guards the beliefs of His righteous servants and vigorously repels the doubts of the heretics. Indeed, his reward is greater than the reward of the *mujāhid* fighter by far.

